

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
PIGEON RIVER COUNTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL
July 20, 2007**

A meeting of the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council was held on Friday, July 20, 2007 at the Pigeon River Country Management Unit Headquarters. Chairman Gustafson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Supina, Don Huff, Bob Bolinger, Mark Ennes, Ken Glasser, Pete Gustafson, Eugene Horan, John Walters, Richard Myers, Arch Reeves, Dave Smethurst, Bud Slingerlend, Bob Hess, & Carol Clute

MEMBERS ABSENT: Randy Sanders, Rique Campa, Mike Castle, Ben Bartlett

EX-OFFICIO PRESENT: Dave Borgeson, Glen Matthews and Laurie Marzolo

EX-OFFICIO ABSENT: Rick Henderson

OTHERS PRESENT: Ray Hoobler, Paul Repasky, Bob Jacobson, Mike Brown, Dayle Garlock, Joe Jarecki, Annamarie Bauer, Lynne Boyd, Chris Morris and Jude Jarecki

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:

Chairman Gustafson said that he received an email from Ben Bartlett saying he is resigning from the Advisory Council.

Randy Sanders, Rique Campa and Mike Castle said they would be unable to attend.

AGENDA

No changes to the published agenda were requested except that Chairman Gustafson decided that minutes were not needed for the May 17th new member orientation meeting.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 20, 2007 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Walters, support by Slingerlend to approve the April 20, 2007 minutes as published. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ray Hoobler, President of the Pigeon River Country Association, said that the Association anticipates publishing a map of the Pigeon River Country to replace the High Country Pathway map booklet. Also, Dale Franz's book about the PRC is being revised and reprinted by the University of Michigan Press. It should be out in the fall. The map and the book will be available from the Association either on its website at www.pigeonrivercountryforest.org or by mail to PRC Association, PO Box 122, Gaylord, MI 49794.

STURGEON VALLEY ROAD BRIDGE

Wade-Trim Design Engineer Paul Repasky said the plans for the Sturgeon Valley Road bridge across the Pigeon River are at 80% completion. He brought color selection brochures for choosing the concrete color. He is recommending "Good Earth" because it will go well with the powder coated guard rail. If there are no objections, they will use "Good Earth". (There were no objections.)

The Road Commission has decided that it wants at least one 8' wide parking space near the northwest corner of the bridge. A gravel surface to blend with the existing pathway will also be included.

The schedule is for construction to start June 2, 2008 and end by August 8, 2008. He said that Federal funding requires a detour and passed out maps (copy attached) of the 42 mile detour that was identified (Old 27 to M 32 to Wilkinson to Marquardt to Sparr to Tin Shanty to Sturgeon Valley). They plan to have signs about the bridge being under construction at Gaylord and other places.

Don Huff said there is no intention to widen Old Vanderbilt, Round Lake and other roads, but they expect more traffic and will be doing extra maintenance.

CONCEPT OF MANAGEMENT UPDATE

FMFM Chief Lynne Boyd introduced Trails Planning Specialist Annamarie Bauer to discuss the public input process. Bauer described how to review and make comments about the draft Concept of Management by going to the DNR website www.michigan.gov/dnr. She said comments are being taken until September 15th. Written comments are preferred and can be done electronically or by mailing a letter. The comments will go to the sub committee that worked on the section for their consideration. A report will be generated that describes the disposition of all comments.

Chief Boyd said public comments are needed to make the best possible document, so in addition to being on the DNR website, the strategy for contacting people to get input includes:

- She and Annamarie attended the PRC Association annual meeting and this meeting.
- They will be meeting with the Resource Stewards.
- There will be a public meeting at the PRC Headquarters.
- Notification that the Concept is being updated is posted in PRC campgrounds.
- There will be several opportunities at Natural Resources Commission meetings, especially the October, November and December meetings.

Chief Boyd said the Concept of Management was adopted by the NRC on December 7, 1973 and has stood the test of time. Reasons to update it are that fisheries, wildlife and forestry practices have evolved and need to be incorporated; many acres have been added to the PRC; recreational activities are changing; and there is more development in the area.

The Steering Committee updated the Objectives of Management in 2005 and comments are not being taken on them. The Steering Committee had the final say on the present draft. There was not consensus, but it is a document that all members can live with. It is still a draft (except for the objectives) so it is subject to change. The intent was to have a document that can be implemented and that has clear direction yet includes some flexibility.

Changes from the 1973 Concept include:

- The boundary has been expanded to include Blue Lakes, Green Timbers, Black River Rod & Gun Club, etc.
- The number of acres of opening and upland brush has been reduced.
- The sinkhole lakes will be opened to fishing and some will be planted to brook or rainbow trout.
- Recreational use criteria have been added to describe acceptable recreational uses, especially new activities; there is much emphasis on enforcement; snowmobiles would be

allowed only on roads; canoe liveries would be prohibited; horseback use and bicycle use would be reviewed every five years; and mountain bikes would not be allowed to travel cross country.

- Alternative energy for commercial use would be prohibited.
- No sand or gravel mining unless reclaiming old pits or for emergencies.
- Oil & gas – In the annexed areas (areas not covered by the Consent Order), there will be no leasing for development. However, if the oil & gas can be obtained by directional drilling with a non development lease, it will be leased. There will be no pipelines or road access for such development in the PRC.
- It will be a priority to continue working with the Pigeon River Habitat Initiative and other similar groups.

Glen Matthews, Chair of the Cover Management and Wildlife Habitat Committee, listed the Committee members and gave an overview of the Committee work. He said there were three main issues that received much deliberation: aspen management; the amount of the PRC that should be in the 0 – 9 year age class; and opening management.

The aspen goal is 27% of the Forest and the goal for acres of young forests (0 – 9 years old) to be maintained is 6% to 7%. Data indicated that presently just under 5% of the PRC is grass or upland brush. The Committee concluded that the level of openings stated in the 1973 Concept is not needed in order to sustain the Elk population at the Elk Management Plan goal and recommended that grass and upland brush should be 6% or 7% of the PRC.

Dave Borgeson, a member of the Aquatic Systems Committee, listed the Committee members and gave an overview of the Committee work. He said the main change is that the sinkhole lakes will be opened to fishing since they are no longer used for research.

Chairman Gustafson asked Council members how the Advisory Council should give input. Does the Council have a motion/position about specific issues? The consensus was that a list of comments and concerns should be made and the chair should comment by the September 15th deadline on behalf of the Council.

Council suggestions about Cover Management and Wildlife Habit as well as Aquatic Systems included:

- Need to say why elk are important.
- In the Treatment Size section, say the Advisory Council must be consulted instead of should be consulted.
- Clarify what the treatment plan is for cover types not currently addressed like northern hardwood, swamp conifer, etc.
- In the third paragraph of the Openings and Upland Brush section, change six and seven to 6 and 7.
- In the Mast Production section, add discussion about beech and possibly ash.
- In the second sentence of Aquatic Resources, add rainbow trout.
- Rather than refer to a specific Fisheries Order by number, change to saying the current guidelines for whatever issue a Fisheries Order is addressing.
- The Recreation and Law Enforcement part says all but electric motors will be prohibited while the Aquatic Resources part says electric motor regulations will be encouraged. It should be prohibited in both sections.
- Should say new dams will not be allowed instead of discouraged.

BREAK 8:25 to 9:00 p.m.

Chairman Gustafson decided to continue with the agenda after the break with the intention of coming back to the Concept after all agenda topics are covered. Also, if needed, a special meeting, probably in Gaylord, will be scheduled to continue the discussion.

OIL AND GAS

Oil and Gas Committee Chair Ken Glasser reported that remediation is successfully reducing the plume of BTEX at the Charlton 4 CPF. The plume is now inside the facility fence, so the cleanup is doing very well. He passed out maps (copy attached) showing the change.

Glasser said the DEQ sent a letter to Schmude Oil, Inc. (copy attached) listing problems with their applications to drill Antrim wells in Song of the Morning Ranch and saying the applications need to be revised. Chief Boyd said that Schmude does not have the right and will not be given the right to cross state land with a pipeline in order to get the Song of the Morning Ranch product to market.

DNR FOREST, MINERAL & FIRE MANAGEMENT REPORT

Dayle Garlock said 20 campgrounds have been closed for the rest of the fiscal year due to budget cuts. Johnson's Crossing in the PRC and Stoney Creek, just to the north, were among those that were closed.

Questions that were asked:

- One purpose for Stoney Creek and Johnson's Crossing was to relieve horseback pressure on Elk Hill and the PRC. What is closing them going to do to Elk Hill? Was the impact on the PRC of closing them considered? There was no response.
- Will the new vacancy on the Advisory Council be filled soon? That is the intention.
- What is the status of the vacant PRC Unit Manager position? It will be reviewed in October but as of now, it is not scheduled to be filled in FY 2008.
- Who is the Enforcement Officer for the PRC now that Joe Jarecki has retired? Will check and get back.

EX-OFFICIO REPORTS

Wildlife Division

Glen Matthews said the number of antlerless permits available will be lower this year than previously. There will be a split early elk hunt in August and September and another hunt in December. The harvest target is 135 to 140 animals. Last week folks were trying to tranquilize collared elk and put fresh collars on them.

The development of the bear management plan will start soon in the Northern Lower Peninsula. There will be an opportunity over the next year to review the draft.

The Governor's Executive Directives have put many restrictions on how money can be spent, so quite a bit of money will not be spent on wildlife habitat projects. Wildlife Technician Mark Monroe got the paperwork in early before the restrictions took effect, so the PRC will be closer to meeting management goals than other parts of the NLP Management Unit.

Fisheries Division

No report.

FMFM Division

Laurie Marzolo discussed her written Ex-Officio Report (copy attached). She also

said that besides closing Johnson's Crossing, pathways and the toilet at Cornwall will not be maintained (the toilet will be temporarily closed).

Marzolo said she is fascinated with the job and has enjoyed being here but does hope it can be filled since she is doing two jobs part way.

Motion by Smethurst, support by Myers, in that Michigan State University's leasing of the buildings at the Pigeon River Country State Forest would preserve those buildings and provide a base for continued MSU research, the Advisory Council strongly urges the Department to work with MSU to make that happen.

After discussion, the motion was not voted on which was apparently an oversight.

CONCEPT OF MANAGEMENT UPDATE CONTINUED

The update of the Concept discussion continued with the Recreation and Law Enforcement part. Council suggestions included:

- The recreation criteria should be more strongly stated by using shall instead of should.
- The Council advises that snowmobiles be restricted to county roads only.
- What was submitted by the Recreation and Law Enforcement Committee was changed. The original submitted language should be used.
- To reach young people, information is best presented by computer. Information about the PRC should be on the DNR website and there should be a couple of computers in the PRC visitor center to present information.
- Quote P. S. Lovejoy more extensively, especially as it applies to recreation.

SPECIAL MEETING SCHEDULED

A special Advisory Council meeting to complete the review of the remaining sections of the Concept update and to continue discussions on sections covered at this meeting was scheduled for 6:30 pm on August 1, 2007, at the Gaylord Operations Service Center.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURN

Motion by Slingerland, support by Supina to adjourn at 10:30 p. m. Motion carried.

Minutes were taken and summarized by Joe Jarecki.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Marzolo, Secretary